

WILLIAM HUNTER AND HIS MUSEUM

An Oration

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ON the 22nd day of May, 1783, there appeared in the *Glasgow Mercury* a notice of the bequest of Dr. William Hunter to the University, and seven days later the University authorities gave an entertainment in the College Hall to Mathew Baillie, his nephew and heir. A numerous company gathered to do honour to Mr. Baillie, and to congratulate the University on the most valuable individual bequest which it has ever received.

For some years the anniversary of William Hunter's matriculation in the University (in 1731) was piously celebrated. How long this continued I do not know. It would appear that gratitude for the gift was mingled with impatience for the delivery of the goods. The University endeavoured to persuade young Baillie, to whom the will had assigned the usufruct of the collections for thirty years, to surrender the museum for a consideration. He replied that he would give up the books, the coins, and most of the pictures, but that the anatomical preparations were necessary to his livelihood, and that of his partner Cruikshank. The University, however, wanted the anatomical collection even more than the books, coins, and pictures, so the deal fell through. It was only in 1807 that the treasures actually reached Glasgow, the greater

part by sea, and the precious cabinet of coins by road, under the protection of an armed guard. The Faculty of the College gave a dinner by way of celebrating the auspicious event. The last, and only other occasion so far as I am aware, on which William Hunter was commemorated was the ninth Jubilee of the University in 1901, when the late Professor John Young, the Curator of the Museum, delivered an address on its Founder.

To-day we meet again to celebrate the memory of our great benefactor, and for us it has a fresh significance, because the last twenty-five years have opened new vistas. Additions have been made to the collections in greater number than in any previous period. Three catalogues have been published which have added to the repute of the Museum, and of the University which is privileged to possess it. A sum of money is now available annually from Treasury Grants, sufficient to carry out with some degree of adequacy the intentions of its Founder for the utilisation and extension of the Museum. Our generation is thus privileged beyond its predecessors, and we must commemorate to-day, along with William Hunter, a long list of donors too numerous to be mentioned individually. In view of the great value of the printed catalogues we must specially recall the memory of the late Mr. Stevenson of Hailie, to whose generosity and public spirit we owe the Catalogue of the Greek Coins ; while we must pay tribute to the enlightened policy of the Bellahouston Trustees in defraying the cost of the Catalogue of the Anatomical Preparations, and to the happy inspiration of the Young Memorial Committee in applying part of the funds collected to commemorate Professor John Young, who had so long been Keeper of the Museum, to the publication of the Catalogue of the Hunterian Manuscripts.

We possess a number of portraits of William Hunter in word and in pigment. The portraits in the Museum by Pine and Reynolds represent him in the picturesque habit of the times. The blue velvet frock in Pine's canvas suggests a gala costume such as he may have worn when he went to Court, in all the glory of powdered wig and ruffles, and sword by his side. In Reynolds' picture we see him in the more professional and work-a-day dress of black velvet, such as we associate with the learned doctors of the day.

William Hunter was short and slight. His features were refined and delicate, the eyes being specially bright and expressive, at once reflective and humorous. The mouth, with its somewhat thin and compressed lips, was expressive of precision, with a suggestion of primness. In Mason Chamberlen's portrait, which was reputed the best likeness by his contemporaries, and which now hangs in the Royal Academy in London, shrewdness and humour are expressed in the features. He is holding in his hand a wax model of the human figure representing the muscles of the body. This model is now in the Museum.

William Hunter was a "scholar and a gentleman." He had courteous and kindly manners. He was very loyal and generous to his friends, and of those he had a large circle, though he could be a bitter opponent to his foes, of whom he had a few. He was, as Dr. Macdonald says, "a man of singular foresight and breadth of view in every department of intellectual life." I have always pictured him as habitually grave and decorous, but we are told that in moments of relaxation he had an uncommon gift of humorous anecdote. He was an entertaining host, though he set his face against luxurious eating and the immoderate use of the punch-bowl. Alexander Carlyle in his *Autobiography* writes of meeting

with Hunter at a Club of Scottish Physicians which gathered at the British Coffee House. "Hunter," he writes, "was gay and lively to the last degree, and often came in to us at nine o'clock fatigued and jaded. He had had no dinner, but supped on a couple of eggs and drank his glass of claret, for though we were a punch club we allowed him a bottle of what he liked best. He repaid us with the brilliancy of his conversation. His toast was 'May no English nobleman venture out of the world without a Scottish Physician, as I am sure there are none who venture in.' "

He was a particularly shrewd canny Scot in his business dealings, scrupulously honourable, but by no means to be imposed upon. He always saw his own side of a bargain, though he did not lose sight of the interest of the other side. His motto was always "business first"; even family duties were apt to be subordinated to the primary instinct of getting on. Proud of his achievements, he had a simple kind of forgivable vanity about his scientific successes, and was resolute that no one should encroach upon his rights of priority in discovery. He was, usually speaking, generous in acceding their rights to other people, and his sense of rectitude excited a very warm feeling when anything was done to suggest a borrowing of ideas, or an assuming of credit for discoveries made by others. The hotness of his feelings led him into unfortunate disputes, especially with *Monro secundus* of Edinburgh and *Percival Pott* the surgeon. Although he was possibly right on both issues, as well as in a more unfortunate and unhappy quarrel with his brother John, the trenchant character of the style of the *Medical Commentaries* did some disservice to Hunter's memory, and has tended to put him in a false light with posterity.

All in all he was a Scot of the best type, with some of the defects as well as the virtues of his countrymen, warm-hearted and generous, shrewd and cautious, but a bit of a thistle withal. Horace Walpole nicknames him "Goody Hunter." To a man of Walpole's character and prejudices he may have appeared a little superior, a little prim and proper, a canny representative of those objectionable Scots who came to make harvest in the South. Yet Walpole was a good friend. He allowed Hunter to select from his cabinet any coins that would be useful for filling gaps in the Greek series. But he would always have his joke.

"To acquire knowledge and to communicate it to others has been the pleasure, the business, and the ambition of my life," wrote William Hunter in the evening of his days. As an author he was not prolific. His contributions to scientific knowledge cannot be placed on quite the same level in point of extent, and general significance, as those of John Hunter, who was of more original genius, but his work, so far as it went, was more uniformly accurate. He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1767. He corresponded with the most famous continental anatomists of his time. An epistle in Latin to Vicq d'Azyr, and letters from Haller and Camper are preserved among the Hunter-Baillie MSS. In 1782 he was chosen, when Haller died, one of the eight foreign Associates of the French Academy. He was also elected in 1778 a member of the Académie de Médecine in succession to Linnaeus. Cautious in conclusion and distrustful of hypotheses, his work was chiefly characterised by a search for the truth of fact, and so he may claim to be included in the ranks of the moderns. Kingston Fox says of one characteristic Hunterian dictum, "It betokens a wide view of the

subject which left nothing out, a judicial temper which stated nothing as a fact that observation had not first proved, and lastly a faculty of insight leading to a shrewd opinion which might perhaps wait a century for its verification." In a short paper on malformed hearts the following sentences witness to this: "Many animals, from the imperfections of their fabric, are necessarily to perish before the common natural period. This is compensated by a great superfluity in the number; and so it is also in the vegetable kingdom. As in vegetables too, the parent generally produces a species very like itself; but sometimes a different constitution, whether better or worse. Whatever may happen in a particular instance, or with regard to an individual, the most perfect and sound animal upon the whole will have the best chance of living to procreate others of his kind; in other words the best breed will prevail." Here we have a remarkable anticipation of a factor in the modern doctrine of evolution. The accuracy and completeness of his observations, and the soundness of his scientific judgment are most conspicuously seen in his greatest contribution to the literature of medicine, *The Anatomy of the Gravid Uterus*. "This immortal work," said Dr. Mathews Duncan (in a passage which has often been quoted), "is one of the stable foundations of the science and art of Midwifery and cannot fail in all future ages to be as valuable and as useful as it now is." The beautiful preparations under my care abundantly witness to the truth of this statement, and still supply everything that naked-eye Anatomy can provide in the elucidation of the facts. The microscope has of course revealed a vast amount of minute detail, but wonderfully little has been discovered to modify the ground work of our knowledge as laid by William Hunter.

If not a voluminous writer, Hunter was a genius in communicating his knowledge to others. As a teacher and lecturer he was *facile princeps* in his day. He had a considerable gift of fluent speech. Adams tells us that "in his dialect he had all the polish of the southern metropolis, with enough of the northern recitative to preserve the close of his sentences from too abrupt a cadence." Smellie, his friend, had rather a dread of what he calls his "glib tongue." His pupils entertained an enormous respect for his powers as a teacher, and his methods of instruction became traditional in the British Schools of Medicine. The novelty and brilliance of his lectures seduced even laymen into an interest in the structure and functions of the human body. Alexander Carlyle relates in his *Autobiography* how he was privileged when on a visit to London to attend with Principal Robertson the lecture of the day—on the eye—the best, both agreed, they had ever heard. Gibbon the Historian went further and attended a course of lectures. He explains in a letter of 1777 that he was specially busy because he had to attend for two hours each afternoon on Dr. Hunter's lectures, "which amuse me," he writes, "beyond any I ever studied."

The scientific reputation of a teacher is to be gauged not only by his own contributions, but by the researches of his pupils which he inspired and directed. In this respect William Hunter has claims for lasting remembrance. In the first place, he trained and launched on his career his younger brother John, while Hewson Cruikshank, and Sheldon, successively assistants in his school, were men of distinction. William Hamilton, the fifth Professor of Anatomy in the University of Glasgow, and the third of the same name, was a member of his class, and when the chair fell vacant by the death of his

father in 1781, Hunter wrote to the Duke of Montrose, the Chancellor, that "it was the interest of Glasgow to give Hamilton the chair rather than his to solicit the appointment." Hamilton was a man of great promise, and his early death at the age of thirty-two was a serious blow to the infant medical school.

Mathew Baillie, his nephew, was the favourite pupil of his latter years. He was the son of James Baillie, Professor of Divinity in this University from 1775 to 1778, and of Dorothea Hunter. His sister Joanna Baillie gained a reputation as a poetess. She was intimate with Sir Walter Scott, and an interesting series of his letters to her are preserved among the Hunter-Baillie MSS. The portraits of this interesting family group are hung in the Hunterian Library. Mathew Baillie was seventeen when his father died. He had been four years at Glasgow College, and had recently gained the Snell Exhibition. For eighteen months he was in continual residence at Balliol College, and then turned to the study of medicine under Hunter. During the vacations the days in London were occupied with professional studies, the evenings with reading of the classics and talks with his uncle. Baillie says in his *Autobiography* that "his manner was never familiar nor warm, but it was mild and kind, and he often conversed with me in the evenings upon various subjects with great confidence." He made young Baillie to understand that he must deserve before he could venture to expect, a dictum I would commend to the younger part of my audience.

William Hunter had a very large acquaintance, professional, literary, and artistic. Cullen was his oldest and most familiar friend. His early circle in London included Smellie, Pringle, James Douglas, Pitcairn, who was twice President of the College of Physicians, Clephane, David

Hume's friend, Smollett, and Armstrong, the author of the didactic poem *The Art of Preserving Health*. These formed with other distinguished men the Scottish group which met at the British Coffee-house. They came, to quote Fanny Burney's words in describing Dr. Armstrong, "from a part of the island whence travellers are by no means proverbially smitten with the reproach of coming in vain ; nor often stigmatised with either meriting or being addicted to failure." They constituted a social and mutual-help fellowship, a national combination perhaps, of the kind satirically described by Johnson as being "so invidious that their friends cannot defend it, and actuated in particulars by a spirit of enterprise so vigorous that their enemies are constrained to praise it, which enabled them to find, or make their way to employment, riches, and distinction." William Hunter was perhaps the most successful of the medical men in the group. Of other friends, Fothergill, the Quaker, collector of rare plants and shells, Fordyce, and Combe, the authority on coins and author of the *Descriptio*, may be mentioned. As Professor of Anatomy at the Royal Academy, Hunter was familiar with Reynolds, and had an extensive acquaintance with the painters and engravers of his time. Sir Robert Strange the famous engraver was an intimate friend.

The general popularity and influential position of William Hunter are witnessed to by many letters from the historical personages of his day. He was appointed Physician to Queen Charlotte in 1762, and counted many of the great ladies of the Court among his patients. A letter from William Pitt engaging his services for Lady Hester, his wife, has a curious interest, because it shows that Hunter brought the younger Pitt into the world, where he played so great a part. A similar letter from

David Garrick, and another from Coutts the great banker, occur among the records, while a note relating to his health from the Marquis of Rockingham, and signed "your obedt. servt. and obliged friend," makes interesting reading. Two letters from Mrs. Thrale, who was much mortified that Dr. Hunter did not approve of her recommendation of a wet-nurse for one of the Royal babies, are curious human documents. But apart from his duties as a Physician, Hunter stood high in public estimation. The Earl of Bute sends him a "curious fish," and asks him to "accept it as a trifling mark of his regard." Lord North writes a personal letter begging him to attend a meeting of the East India Company, and to record his vote in favour of a bargain between the Company and the Government. With the Earl of Hertford Hunter had closer and more personal ties. I do not know that any correspondence exists, but in Horace Walpole's letters to the Earl in 1763-64, when he was British Ambassador at Paris, quite a number of references to Hunter occur. He seems to have regularly supplied Lord Hertford with current political literature. The following passage in a letter dated December 20th, 1763, "Dr. Hunter is very good and calls on me sometimes. You may guess whether we talk over you or not," reveals the position Hunter occupied with both men.

William Hunter did not belong to Johnson's Literary Club, but he was acquainted with most of its members. Oliver Goldsmith, Allan Ramsay, Dr. Burney, were among his correspondents; in each case the occasion was some kind of charitable action. Allan Ramsay asks him to see a poor artist and adds, "being well acquainted with your benevolent disposition I make no apology for the request."

The fact that Dr. Johnson asked Dr. Hunter to present his *Journey to the Western Islands* to the King is not

mentioned in any of the biographies of William Hunter. That he did act as Dr. Johnson's ambassador, although no reference is made to the matter by either Boswell or Hawkins, is proved by a letter dated 29th December, 1774, in which Johnson says, "I am very much obliged by your willingness to present my book to His Majesty. I have not courage to offer it myself, yet I cannot forbear to wish that He may see it, because it endeavours to describe a part of his subjects seldom visited and little known, and his Benevolence will not despise the meanest of his people."¹

The letters from Smollett to Hunter are among the most interesting of the series preserved in the Hunter-Baillie collection. Most of them are well known. A new letter has recently been presented to the Museum by Dr. David Murray. It is dated from the Rainbow Coffee-house, Monday, October 15th, 1750, and it runs, "I called at your house in hopes of getting a Dinner, but my principal Design was to desire you will appoint a meeting with Drs. Smellie and Pitcairn, and I shall take care to attend you. Peter Gordon will wait on you tomorrow to receive your directions on that subject."

The nature of the conference cannot be conjectured, but the letter shows the degree of intimacy which existed between the two in 1750. In a letter to Cullen dated 29th July, 1758, Hunter says, "Smollett I know not what to say of. He has great virtues, and has a turn for the warmest friendships. I have seen him very little for some years. He is easily hurt, and is very ready to take prejudices. There had been a great shyness between him and me, which his very kind behaviour to me when

¹ This letter was first published in 1906 by Mr. Victor G. Plarr, Librarian to the Royal College of Surgeons of England, in *Chambers' Journal* of that year.

I was attacked by Douglass, Pott, and Monro has as yet scarcely conquered. . . .” All the clouds seem to have been blown away by 1762, when the touching letters were written which were published by Mr. Victor G. Plarr in the *British Medical Journal* of 1904 from the Hunter-Baillie Collection. Smollett was in great need, and appealed to Dr. Hunter for help. It was not the first time, because he says, “I do not know whether God will have it that you should endure the Persecution of my wants, without flinching, or that I should at length tire you out, and be shaken off at once.” Hunter sent him £50, which was very gratefully acknowledged, and to the letter was appended a formal promise to pay back the £50 when required. The letter is endorsed in Hunter’s bold and clear hand thus, “London, 13th May, 1766. In case of my death I desire my Executors will not make any demand upon Dr. Smollett, because I sent the money to him as a present, never meaning to take it again.” In a parting letter on the eve of his departure for the Continent, Smollett thanks Hunter for the “manifold Instances of your Friendship which I have received; Instances which I shall ever remember with the strongest Emotions of Gratitude, Esteem, and Affection.”

The generosity of Hunter in relieving others was not confined to this instance only. He gave away all his earnings from his first course of lectures to his friends, and actually left himself without enough money to advertise his second course. John Hunter once sent a poor patient to him with a note in which the sentence occurs, “He has no money, and you don’t want any, so that you are well met.” But Hunter could refuse fees even from rich patients. Lady Suffolk died in childbed in 1767, to Hunter’s great grief, and he refused any fee from her husband. The letters exchanged

between the two men on this occasion show that Hunter was a man of very deep feelings. However careful in business, however keen an eye he had to success, Hunter had none of the alleged *nearness* of the proverbial Scot.

William Hunter, like a wise man and prudent practitioner, took no part in politics, so far as is known. Yet he saw the Rebellion of 1745, the Conquest of Canada, the Declaration of Independence by the American Colonies, and he died in the year of the Treaty of Versailles. We have seen that he was acquainted with most of the statesmen of his day, and one would like to have heard his private opinions upon their doings, if only to get some further insight into his character. There is evidence to show that he took an active interest in the political events of the time, but we have only two indications of what his views may have been. From the quotations that follow, it may be conjectured that during the ministry of Lord North he was on the side of the Court and the Ministry, like many of his countrymen. The disastrous events which led up to the loss of the American Colonies seemed to have moved him deeply, for in 1778 he wrote to a friend, "I told you that I have taken my leave of Politics; and am sorry to say that as far as I can judge this country deserves humiliation or rather a scourge." In the winter of 1780 he seems to have made some sort of outburst at his lecture, and Walpole, writing to the Rev. William Mason, makes the following characteristic and amusing reference to it. "This country is lost . . . and nothing can save it. Do you want a new instance? Dr. Hunter, that Scotch Nightman, had the impudence t'other day to pour out at his anatomical lecture a more outrageous Smeltiad than Smelt himself [Smelt, the Under-Governor of the Princes, was a creature of the Court], and imputed all our disgraces

and ruin to the Opposition. Burke was present and said he had heard of political arithmetic, but never before of political anatomy, yet for a Scot to dare thus in the heart of London, and be borne, is proof enough that the nation itself is beyond redemption."

Having sketched the character and career of William Hunter, let me now turn to consider the part that Glasgow College played in the making of the man.

William Hunter matriculated under Rosse the Professor of Humanity in 1731, and his studies continued for five years. He was destined by his parents for the Ministry. He entered the University just at the opening of a new era in its history. The fortunes and prestige of the College of Glasgow were at a very low ebb for a considerable time after the Revolution. The professors, selected from the ranks of the Clergy of the West of Scotland, were more distinguished, as Ramsay of Ochtertyre records, for Orthodoxy than for depth of learning, liberality of thought, or refinement of manners. From 1724 to 1728 the Faculty of the College was divided into two camps. In the session of 1725 Wodrow tells us in his *Analecta* that the College was very thin, and he adds, "the breaches and divisions have lessened the reputation of the society and multitudes now go to Edinburgh," "for which," he remarks in another entry, "the masters may blame themselves." Principal Stirling was of the older school, and carried things with a high hand over both staff and students. In this he was fortified by the Commissioners of 1718, who suspended all his opponents in the Faculty from "exerceing any part of their office and profession within the College of Glasgow, other than their teaching and exerceing as usuall their ordinary discipline in their classes, and receiving their ordinary sallary and emoluments." There were tumults and

demonstrations on the part of the students because they were excluded from the choice of the Rector, and the opposition professors sided with them. There was a Royal visitation in 1726, but according to Wodrow the visitors seem to have had some other objects in view in Glasgow, and did little to mend matters. He states that "some stigma is put upon the last visitors in vesting the boyes in their senseless pretended privilege because in my opinion it is to their own hurt." Dr. Dunlop, Professor of Greek, and others, however, championed the students, but it is suggested by Wodrow that this was rather to get their knife into the Principal than for any other better motive—clearly a calumny. As a matter of fact the struggle was really one of tendencies, a contest of two schools of thought, a newer and more liberal school headed by Dunlop, an older-fashioned and highly orthodox school led by the Principal. The battle was joined at every appointment made by the Faculty, whether of Dean or Factor. Further troubles centred round the person and doings of Dr. Simson, Professor of Divinity. He was misguided enough to express very liberal views to his students, and was reputed unsound on the doctrine of the Trinity. His case engaged not only the Church Courts, but, to an extraordinary degree, the public mind both north and south of the Tweed. The more liberal-minded professors resented the interference of the ecclesiastical courts with their privileges, but ultimately Professor Simson was suspended from the exercise of his office, although he retained his stipend. The state of feeling between the parties may be guessed by the following naïve entry of Wodrow under September 20th, 1727. "Mr. Simson came from England the end of this month, just about ten or twelve minutes before Principal Stirling died, and was with him at his death;

but I believe it was the Principal's happiness he did not know him."

Mr. Neil Campbell, who succeeded Stirling as Principal, assumed the duty of teaching the Divinity class, but he seems to have performed the duties in a perfunctory manner, and few students attended. This state of affairs continued until Simson's death in 1740, and during all this time, as Wodrow puts it, "Mr. Simson enjoyed his sallary . . . and the youth of the West of Scotland were perfectly neglected."

It was not a happy moment for a thoughtful and sensitive student to enter on the training for the Ministry in Glasgow, and we do not greatly wonder that William Hunter discovered that his leanings were not towards theological studies.

Hunter attended the Latin class in his first session. Mr. Rosse, the professor, does not appear to have been a man of great mark as a scholar, but he must have been a good teacher. He introduced the practice of lecturing in English instead of Latin, and included in his course lectures on Classical history and literature. The Greek chair was held by Dr. Dunlop, the "old hero," as Francis Hutcheson called him. He took a zealous part for the revival of Greek and Greek culture in Scotland. Under these two men Hunter got a training in the classics which must have been sound and extensive. He learned to write Latin with ease and elegance. Only a thorough classical education on a broad literary and historical basis can explain Hunter's interest in, and knowledge of, bibliography and numismatics. If he did not get that at college, he certainly had not time to acquire it in after-life. But I fancy that the temper of the lad's mind and character was most strongly moulded by the teaching of Francis Hutcheson, who was appointed to the Chair

of Moral Philosophy the year before Hunter came up. He brought a new tone and spirit into Glasgow College, and was extraordinarily popular and successful as a teacher. He brought his subject into touch with life, and gave his students a new vision. Leechman, his friend and biographer, tells us that "he awakened in them a taste for literature, fine arts, and everything that is ornamental and useful in human life, and he had remarkable success in reviving the study of ancient literature, particularly the Greek, which had been much neglected in the University before his time; he spread such an ardor for knowledge, and such a spirit of enquiry everywhere around him, that the conversation of the students turned with great keenness upon subjects of learning and taste." Hunter had high ideals of life and conduct and of service. He was sincerely religious in temper. He was a firm believer in Design. In his letters and lectures he expresses his sense of awe and wonder in face of the order and beauty of nature. A letter of condolence to Lord Suffolk on the loss of his wife reveals his belief in a Wise and Benevolent Deity, and his paper "On the Uncertainty of the Signs of Murder in the case of Bastard Children," shows a degree of benevolence and broad-minded sympathy in advance of his day. All this is typical Hutcheson teaching, and very different from the strict Calvinistic doctrine in which young Hunter was probably brought up. Although Hunter was a friend and admirer of Hume, he was not in sympathy with his sceptical philosophy, and remained faithful to the end to the broad philosophical outlook inculcated by Hutcheson. His library contains a number of Hutcheson's works, and the fact that among the number is his *System of Moral Philosophy*, which was the substance of his lectures, and was published after his death

in 1746, may perhaps serve to show that Hunter, although now entirely devoted to Science, retained an interest in Philosophy, and cherished the memory of his teacher. In this connexion it may be noted in passing that the Library contains, as Dr. John Young pointed out in his address in 1901, many works on early theology. Dr. Young comments upon this as a curious circumstance, but it seems rather to be an index to a side of Hunter's mind which has been little commented upon.

In Glasgow, Science was in its very infancy in Hunter's student days. Dr. Simson, the Professor of Mathematics, was a very eminent geometrician. A letter from Professor James Baillie in 1777 announces to his brother-in-law the despatch of the posthumous works of Simson. This shows that William Hunter must have had some interest in, and admiration for Simson, but there is not much evidence to show that he was anything of a mathematician. Dick, the Professor of Natural Philosophy, taught Experimental Physics twice a week, so that Hunter had some instruction in this branch of Science. A Botanic Garden was formed in 1704, and in 1720 a Professorship of Anatomy and Botany was founded by the Crown. The patent issued to Dr. Brisbane, the first professor, neglected to stipulate that he should teach Anatomy, and the same omission was made in the case of Dr. Johnstoun, who was the first occupant of the Chair of Medicine, founded in 1714. Both these gentlemen enjoyed complete sinecures, Brisbane for twenty-two, Johnstoun for thirty-seven years. The Royal Visitors of 1726 who considered this remarkable state of affairs were apparently powerless in view of the commissions held by the Professors.

Dr. John Gordon gave some instruction in Anatomy before Brisbane's appointment. In 1730, to meet the

lack of teaching in Anatomy, the Faculty of the College allowed Mr. Jo. Paisley, Surgeon, to advertise a course of lectures, and gave him the Old Humanity room for the purposes of his class. The permission was repeated for a number of years, because it was understood that "the teaching was very beneficial to the College." It was almost certainly purely empiric, and ranked in no way with the professorial teaching of Monro *primus* in Edinburgh.

Wodrow writes in 1729, on his repeated theme of the divisions in the College of Glasgow, "another thing like to divide them (the masters) is a design by the Principal to settle Dr. Campbell of Paisley as Professor of Anatomy. He wants persons in the Faculty to whom he can entirely trust, and when he spoke to Dr. Brisbane and Dr. Johnstoun they stormed furiously, and told him he must not take such steps as to increase persons to vote for him." At the date of the visitation Wodrow comments on the situation thus, "Dr. Brisbane might have been scored off [relieved of his chair], but on an examination they found his patent did not oblige him to teach. In short Dr. Johnstoun teaches as little as he, and praelects none, neither does Mr. Forbes [Professor of Law], save on exorbitant fees. But these are on the prevailing side and must not be touched, and a foe must go with a friend."

Glasgow College thus gave Hunter no call to Medicine, any more than to the Church. He left College without definite purpose, and his future was determined by the happy conjunction with Cullen. When, after three happy years spent as apprentice to Cullen, he looked for some theoretical medical training, he turned to Edinburgh. There under Monro *primus* his scientific bent was fixed. It was intended that he should return to Hamilton as partner with Cullen, but the lure of London, and a greater

ambition, carried him across the border to the realisations of his dreams, and the final enrichment of his Alma Mater.

William Hunter was twenty-one when he went to London. Within ten years he made himself the leading teacher in the Metropolis. Within the second decade of his career he had founded a school, more efficient and scientific than anything that had yet existed. But further, by the time he was forty-two years of age William Hunter had built up a very large and lucrative practice, was Physician Extraordinary to the Queen, and a personage of influence and weight in the country. To show that a prophet may sometimes have honour in his own country, I quote a letter of David Hume written in 1775, which, referring to an election to the chair of Divinity in Glasgow University, says, “It seems Dr. Hunter supports a friend of his, and nothing can be refused him by the University.”

The editor of the particular series of Hume’s letters, from which this quotation is taken, makes the suggestion that perhaps it was already known that he intended to make a magnificent bequest to the University. It is a suggestion piquant and interesting; piquant as a reflection on the motives that may determine the appointment of a Professor of Divinity, interesting in the light of Hunter’s proposals to Cullen in 1765. It is well known that, disappointed and deeply hurt at the slighting of his generous offer to found at his own expense a School of Anatomy and Physic in London provided the Ministry granted him a site on Crown land, he wrote to Cullen as follows, “I have a great inclination to do something considerable at Glasgow some time or other. If you think proper (and you are the best judge) you may talk of the scheme as a secret with two or three different people and then you know all the town will know it,” and again on the following day, “Could you . . . join me to raise

a School of Physic on a noble plan at Glasgow? I would propose to give all my Museum and Library and build a Theatre at my own expense; and I should ask nothing for teaching but the credit of doing it with reputation. You and Black and I, with those we could chuse, I think could not fail of making our neighbours stare. We should draw all the English, and I presume, most of the Scotch, students. Among other reasons I should not dislike teaching Anatomy near my two friends, the Monroes, to whom I owe so much." The last is a delightful touch of the old Adam, but a noble scheme truly, and what a triumvirate! It was not to be, however. Glasgow had already lost Cullen, Black was just about to follow him eastwards, Hunter remained in London. Brisbane and Johnstoun 'prelected none.' The younger University in the east had its medical school organised and alive, while Glasgow slept, and permitted herself to be bereft of her most distinguished sons.

It does not follow that what Hunter would have done in 1775 he was prepared to do in 1765. So far as I can discover there is nothing to show why Hunter ultimately left his Museum to Glasgow. I fancy it was pure love for his Alma Mater and gratitude for what he received from her, as well as a belief that Glasgow could best utilise it as an instrument of instruction.

Let us now turn to the Museum itself and see what it reveals of Hunter's mind and of his plans for the future of his collections. As for the treasures themselves they are there to see. The unique library, the superb coin cabinet, the zoological, geological, ethnological specimens, and the anatomical preparations, all have something to tell, if time permitted, of the man and of his aims in founding the Museum.

The first necessity for William Hunter as a teacher was

a collection of specimens. He speedily gathered a good teaching collection, partly by purchase, and he informed himself by visits to continental schools of all that was being done in the way of producing anatomical preparations. He promoted methods by which structures could be preserved without desiccation, and he carried to great perfection the practice of injection, more especially of the fine lymphatic channels. Under his guidance his pupils, John Hunter, Hewson, Cruikshank, and Sheldon, carried out researches which constantly added to the number of preparations in his museum, while from his own special researches on the anatomy of the gravid uterus the splendid series illustrative of that subject was built up. But in those days Anatomy included a wider field than it does to-day. It embraced Pathology, and so side by side with his morphological preparations there gathered specimens which illustrated the processes of disease. As a teacher of repute, and the acknowledged authority on anatomy, specimens came to him from all quarters to swell his collection.

His scientific, or, to use the term of his day, his philosophical outlook, led him to take all nature into his picture, and he gathered objects in every branch of Natural History. Nothing that revealed the wonders, or the beauties, of Nature was outside his interest. Everything that related to the nature and history of mankind was treasure trove. But in all his collecting the inward push was not the desire to possess things for their own sake. He was not, like most collectors of his day, and some private collectors of the present time, a mere gatherer of curiosities or natural rarities. If I am at all right in my estimation of William Hunter, every specimen or preparation suggested to him either a fact recorded, or a problem to be solved. The last thing he would have

approved was a *dead* museum, a mere storehouse. He surely and certainly meant that his preparations and his specimens were to take their place with others as stones built into the rising house of knowledge.

The second need of William Hunter as a teacher and student was books, and his first purchases were no doubt medical and anatomical treatises. But as his interests widened and his opportunities enlarged, the collecting of all kinds of books and pamphlets, of rare editions and manuscripts, went on with the same energy as characterised his gathering of scientific specimens, and the same spirit inspired it. His acquisitiveness was informed by sound scholarship, and directed with rare judgment and foresight. In his lifetime he put his library freely at the disposal of scholars. Now fully and carefully catalogued it remains an unexhausted mine of wealth to bibliographers. The same traits of mind and character are revealed by the history of the Coin Cabinet. This has been so admirably presented to us by Dr. Macdonald in his introduction to the Stevenson Catalogue of Greek Coins that I need not dwell upon it. I will only say in passing that the Cabinet has been notably enriched in the present session by the addition of large and valuable series of Greek, Roman, and English coins collected by the late Mr. Thomas Coats, and presented by Sir Thomas Glen Coats, Bart.

The small collection of pictures in the Museum is as distinctive of William Hunter's taste in art as the books and coins are of his scholarship. Its inner history has never been told, and so far as I am aware the data for such a history are not now recoverable. In Laskey's Catalogue, published in 1813, fifty-four pictures are mentioned. Of later editions the most notable are a fine Sebastian del Piombo; a Karel du Jardin; a portrait

of Harvey, the discoverer of the circulation of the blood by Van Bemmel ; a fine Dutch Landscape by Koninck ; and two canvases from the Foulis Collection, the Descent from the Cross by Raphael, and The Martyrdom of St. Catherine by Jean Cossiers. Of the pictures which actually belonged to Hunter, his own portrait and those of Professor and Mrs. Baillie by Pine were probably painted to his own order. The portrait of Joanna Baillie by Masquerier, and those of his two friends Cullen and Smollett, by Cochrane, are later additions. It is known that most of the portraits by Sir Godfrey Kneller, the picture, said to be by Titian, of Vesalius the great anatomist, and a Canaletto came from Dr. Mead's sale ; while a Virgin and Child by Guido Reni and a St. Catherine by Domenichino were purchased from Sir Luke Schaub's collection. The portraits of Lady Hertford by Roslin, and of Lady Maynard by Reynolds, have a personal interest, as both were patients of William Hunter. It is possible that they were presented to him. In 1814 Queen Charlotte expressed the desire to have a copy of the portrait of Lady Hertford, and the University authorities commissioned Mr. Raeburn to execute it. A letter of thanks from the queen for the picture is preserved in the Museum. The picture of Lady Maynard was painted by Sir Joshua in 1761. She was the wife of Sir William Maynard, a 'turfite' of the time, and was a noted beauty. She was, as I have said, a patient of Dr. Hunter's, and the heroine of a piece of very domestic history in which the younger Pitt played an unconscious and perhaps an unwilling part, and which I cannot refrain from mentioning on account of its human interest. In the Hunter-Baillie Collection there is a letter addressed to Dr. Hunter from the Earl of Chatham to this effect, "I certainly wished to have continued Nurse Carruthers about my boy till

he had been older and more particularly at this time that he is every day cutting more teeth, but on reading the account your letter gives of the melancholy situation of poor Lady Maynard I cou'd not hesitate in giving my consent to part with Nurse Carruthers, and shall feel happy if I have been able, by so doing, to contribute at all towards alleviating the distress of Sir William and Lady Maynard."

The artistic taste of Hunter's day was strongly biased towards the Italian School of Painting, and lesser masters like Domenichino, Sacchi, and Guido Reni were popular. Accordingly we find among Hunter's pictures a considerable number of Italian pictures of this class. There is, however, a fine Murillo which was engraved by Sir Robert Strange, and the Dutch School is represented by Rembrandt, Swaneveldt, Weenix, Wouvermans, Jan Steen, and Snyders. But the most interesting pictures in the collection are three Chardins. Hunter seems to have been the only private collector of pictures by Chardin at that time in this country ; examples are rare even now in our galleries. Furst in his book on Chardin reproduces the "Portrait of a Man," reputed to be "John Hunter." It resembles the portrait of William Hunter much more than any known portrait of John, but no record exists that either of the brothers sat to Chardin. It would be most interesting to know whether Chardin really painted his early British patron. It would be still more interesting to know why Chardin's art appealed to Hunter. One can well imagine that the acute and patient observation in Chardin's still-life pictures would appeal to his trained faculties ; that the consummate skill of the craftsman, of which he was no mean judge, and the subtle technical devices which Chardin employed to obtain his effects, would interest him. I have little doubt that

he appreciated as we do the poetry which enters into Chardin's painting of common things, and that his eyes were open to the delicate beauty and spiritual value which can be imparted to the simplest objects by the hand of such a master.

A study of the Museum in all its departments indicates that William Hunter, in founding it, intended that it should be organised for historical, literary, and scientific research, and that it should be extended with the growth of knowledge. In spite of our partiality we are forced to admit that his aims in presenting his museum to Glasgow have as yet been but partially realised. I do not mention this to cast blame on our predecessors, but rather to emphasise our own responsibilities in the matter.

In regard to the future of the Museum it is necessary to face certain changes in the ideas which govern the arrangement of University Collections. The old plan of a general University Museum, with all its several departments under one roof, might have succeeded had it been conceived in a large enough spirit, and had the necessary funds been available. The development of the Museum, the topography of the University Buildings, and the strain on the accommodation for classrooms and laboratories, have determined a different line of evolution. I say line of evolution advisedly, because much change has been forced upon us by external circumstances. Yet I am convinced that the growth has been in the right direction, and my only regret is that when the Main Hall of the New Anatomical Museum was planned twenty-five years ago, it was not constructed on a larger scale. The Hunterian Anatomical Preparations now displayed in that Museum, and safely housed behind glass, are placed and utilised as William Hunter intended they should be. Although kept apart as a unit collection, they now take

their place along with the anatomical preparations which have accumulated since Hunter's day. The Natural History section, greatly enriched under Professor Graham Kerr, will soon be transferred like the Anatomical Preparations to a special Zoological Museum. Space will then be available for the valuable Geological collections constantly expanding under Professor Gregory, while the opportunity will present itself for the organisation of a general cultural museum on scientific lines which should prove of interest to students and public alike. Further, additional accommodation will be provided in the Hunterian Library for the display of a larger number of our hidden treasures.

All this is as William Hunter wished it to be, and I would appeal to the University, and to its friends, to see to it that the requisite financial support is provided for the extension, improvement, and upkeep of the Museum, and I trust that corporate enthusiasm and energy may never be lacking to make it all that William Hunter designed it to become.

